

TREASURE

OUR

georgia

COASTS

and

ESTUARIES

GEORGIA'S COASTAL ZONE IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE STATE. TOURISM IS A GROWING COMPONENT OF COASTAL GEORGIA. THE FORESTRY AND TIMBER INDUSTRY IS THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE COASTAL ZONE. A SIGNIFICANT CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND TO HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT HAS OCCURRED OVER THE LAST 40 YEARS. MANAGERS ARE STRUGGLING WITH CONSERVING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE COAST WHILE COPING WITH A RAPIDLY GROWING POPULATION.

THE COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT (CZMA) PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF THESE COASTAL AREAS. THIS LAW, WHICH IS ADMINISTERED BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA), RECOGNIZES A NATIONAL INTEREST IN OUR COASTAL AND OCEAN AREAS. IT ALLOWS EACH STATE AND TERRITORY, NOT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TO DETERMINE HOW BEST TO BALANCE CONSERVATION OF THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT WITH HUMAN USES THAT DEPEND ON COASTAL RESOURCES.

THE CZMA IN GEORGIA

The CZMA establishes two programs to balance the use and protection of America's coasts. The Coastal Management Program gives states a flexible framework to address a broad range of community development, economic, and natural resource issues at the state and local level. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System protects key coastal areas for long-term scientific study, education, and resource stewardship.

Georgia Coastal Management Program

Approved: 1998

Lead Agency: Department of Natural Resources

Georgia Coastal Management Program is an integrated, networked program that uses existing state laws to manage Georgia's critical coastal resources. The program's goal is to balance economic development with conservation of most valuable coastal resources by providing a coordinated, comprehensive management framework with which to address resource issues. More than 6 percent of Georgia's Coastal Zone Management funds are awarded to eligible local governments/communities and learning institutions as Coastal Incentive Grants.

miles of coastline
2,344

coastal population in 2000
538,469

fy03 czma core (section 306)
funding
\$2,000,000

fy03 czma enhancements
(section 309) funding
\$273,000

fy03 coastal nonpoint
implementation
\$161,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve operations, education,
monitoring and stewardship
\$555,000

fy03 national estuarine research
reserve land acquisition and
construction
\$1,490,200



Accomplishments of the Georgia Coastal Management Program include:

- *streamlining the permitting process for construction of recreational docks by issuing joint federal and state permits;*
- *conducting training workshops for resource stakeholders to increase understanding of state and federal laws;*
- *establishing and operating the Coastal Ark, a mobile classroom designed to bring training experience directly to local community leaders;*
- *completing a community needs assessment of all municipal and county governments in the coastal area;*
- *providing technical assistance to local governments in meeting identified needs;*
- *developing guidelines for preparation and evacuation of marinas for hurricanes based on input from marine business owners;*
- *establishing the Georgia Research Council to provide scientific findings to natural resource managers;*
- *establishing a comprehensive coastal water quality monitoring program and implementing a Beach Water testing and public advisory process; and*
- *providing an annual economic impact of \$2,500,000 in support of coastal projects through the Coastal Incentive Grant Program.*

Georgia's National Estuarine Research Reserve Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve

Designated: 1976

Lead Agency: Department of Natural Resources

The Sapelo Island Reserve is one of a national network of coastal protected areas that conducts science, education, and stewardship. The reserve system is a partnership between NOAA and the states. Located seven and a half miles northeast of Darien, Sapelo Island is one of the largest and most pristine Georgia barrier islands.

RESEARCH: With broad-based community support and interaction both on Sapelo Island and the mainland, the reserve actively participates in the System-wide Monitoring Program. The reserve is working with the Long Term Ecological Program on sharing data. Research is also conducted at the University of Georgia Marine Institute, which is located on the island. The Marine Institute conducts studies on the general ecology and system energetics of the Sapelo Island Reserve's salt marshes. Reserve staff also conducts research on oak restoration efforts.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: Sapelo Island Reserve conducts both on- and off-site educational programs, geared to audiences ranging from general public forums to students and special interest groups. Interpretive tours of the reserve offer individuals the opportunity to experience the many facets of Georgia's barrier islands and estuaries. Education staff provide teacher training and are working with Sea Grant to build a Coastal Training Program.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The Georgia Coastal Management Program has worked closely with both the Sapelo Island Reserve and the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography on Skidaway Island to improve understanding of coastal ecological processes and human impacts on the region. The Georgia Coastal Management Program has funded several studies through its coastal incentives grants (CZMA funds) to look at contaminant runoff from newly developed areas into estuaries, impacts of freshwater withdrawal on saltwater regimes of estuaries and using the data to inform decisionmakers about water quality and habitat issues facing coastal Georgia.